

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

Special Meeting

Monday - February 9, 2009 - 3:00 p.m.

A special meeting of the Knox County Commission was held on Monday, February 9, 2009, at 3:00 p.m., at the county courthouse, 62 Union Street, Rockland, Maine.

Commission members present were: Anne Beebe-Center, Commissioner District #1, Richard L. Parent, Jr., Commissioner District #2, and Roger A. Moody, Commissioner District #3. County staff present included: County Administrator Andrew Hart, Administrative Assistant Candice Richards, EMA Director Ray Sisk, IT Director Jeff Lake, Communications Director Linwood Lothrop, and Finance Director Kathy Robinson.

Other people present: Roger Lichtman of Lichtman Associates, Ken Schiano and Paula Beall of QA13, Chris Shrum of EMDC, Normand Laberge of Tidewalker Associates, Barry Norris, Vice-chair of the KRCC and Union Fire Chief, Tom Johnston, Chair of the KRCC Advisory Board and the KRCC Executive Board, Chris Ferguson of the St. George EMA, Chris Knight of the CFAA, Rockland Deputy Police Chief Wally Tower, and Mason Johnson from Thomaston.

Special Meeting – Agenda		
Monday – February 9, 2009 – 3:00 p.m.		
I.	3:00	Meeting Called To Order
II.	3:01	Discussion Items
		1. Space Utilization and Needs Assessment of Communications Department, Emergency Management Agency, and Sheriff’s Patrol Department.
III.		Adjourn

I. Meeting Called to Order
Commission Chair Anne Beebe-Center called the February 9, 2009 special meeting of the Knox County Commission to order at 3:00 p.m.

II. Discussion Items
1. Space Utilization and Needs Assessment of Communications Department, Emergency Management Agency, and Sheriff’s Patrol Department.
Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center asked County Administrator Andrew Hart if he wanted to start.

County Administrator Andrew Hart stated that for the public hearing at seven o’clock he would give a more comprehensive outline of the needs assessment process. He stated that for this meeting he would give an abbreviated version since many of the people present were already aware of the process that led up to having a needs assessment done. He stated that on May 14, 2008, a public hearing was held regarding the Old County Road property. At this meeting there was a lot of discussion about the property and the fact that there was a lack of information provided ahead of time. The consensus of the public was that leasing/purchasing the Old County Road property was not a good approach for the County to take, that the County should take a step back and do a space and needs assessment to find out what the County actually needed, and to get more information out to the public as well as receive more input from the public and the end users who utilize the emergency and law enforcement services of the County. It was decided by the Commission at that time to send out an RFP for a space utilization and needs assessment. The RFP was sent out on August 12, 2008. The County received two bids, one from SMRT, and the other from QA13 / Lichtman Associates, which were opened on September 15, 2008. After both firms were interviewed on October 3, 2008, the Commission met on October 14, 2008 and awarded the bid to QA13 / Lichtman Associates. Since then, representatives from QA13 and Lichtman Associates have met with department heads from Communications, Patrol, EMA, and the Jail. They have also met with the Dispatch Advisory Board and the Knox Regional Communications Center Executive Board.

County Administrator Andrew Hart stated that Roger Lichtman from Lichtman Associates and Ken Schiano from QA13 and his team were present to do a presentation for the Commissioners, the department heads, the Dispatch Advisory Board, and the Knox Regional Communications Center Executive Board.

County Administrator Andrew Hart stated that he wanted to update everyone present on the grant that the County had been working towards applying for. The plan had been to apply for a grant through Homeland Security for the EOC and the EMA, but there were some concerns about the process. The due date had been moved from May up to February 6th, which meant

everything else had to be sped up and prepared sooner. It changed the whole focus of the project and QA13 had to take a faster approach to their assessment since specific information was needed to complete the grant paperwork. As the deadline approached, there were some discussions about where we were in the process. The plan had been to have informational public meetings and to get public input, but the due date change for the grant meant there was no time left for that. Those involved in getting ready to apply for the grant felt that there was not enough time to have a complete product to submit to Homeland Security. The feeling was that the County should hold off applying for the grant. The grant was only for \$1 million and would not have funded the entire project if the County decided to construct a new building to house the three departments. The County is not at the point of site selection or construction phase. The RFP was strictly for a space utilization and needs assessment. Once the assessment is completed, it will be up to the Commissioners to decide what the next step will be, which may be to put out another RFP for architectural drawings and some actual options to choose from. The County is not at this point yet. We are still trying to determine what the County needs for those departments.

Ken Schiano stated that he is a partner in QA13 Architects from Bangor, Maine. QA13 has been in business since 1986 and they have done a lot of work in the state. Paula Beall is his partner. Mr. Schiano stated that Roger Lichtman of Lichtman Associates was also present at the meeting. He stated that Lichtman Associates does justice service design for various facilities, such as prisons and other correctional facilities. They design facilities globally. Lichtman Associates also work with a team member not present at this meeting, named Jim Robertson. Mr. Robertson is from Denver, Colorado and has been a consultant for various agencies for justice services. He has experience as someone who has worked as a corrections officer and has been an invaluable asset to the process. Mr. Schiano stated that Norman Laberge was also present at the meeting. Mr. Laberge is a civil engineer owns an engineering firm called Tidewalker Associates located in Trescott, Maine. Mr. Laberge specializes in environmental assessment, hazardous materials, mitigation issues, and alternative energy sources.

Mr. Schiano stated that he wanted to explain what QA13 was asked to do and also what they were *not* asked to do. He stated that the project is in the program development phase. There has been some press recently that has made assumptions about what responsibilities and tasks QA13 has to do. This phase of the project is nowhere near dealing with issues of site selection or schematic design. QA13 was asked to collect information from all of the agencies, to tour the sites, to see what the needs are, and to put the information in some sort of format which would allow the County to see what the shape the departments are in. This will help the County look at what some of the options are so things can move forward based on the needs assessment. There is a level of orientation that is pre-design, and that is where this project currently stands. Mr. Schiano stated that even though he and his partners would be showing some options based on the jail site, he is not in any way advocating the jail site. It is one of many options. The jail site represents certain advantages as a site but QA13 is not advocating using the jail site because the project is not at that state. There are issues that that site accomplishes that others do not, or perhaps to a lesser degree. When the project gets to the stage where the County begins looking at sites and designs, that is when the merits of the jail site, versus other sites, will be discussed.

Mr. Schiano explained that the presentation would follow this agenda:

Presentation by QA13 / Lichtman Associates

1. Photos of the existing areas by component – current conditions
2. Program space lists – identified needs
3. Needs vs. existing space allocations
4. Site drawing and analysis with existing condition site photos
5. Options and concepts – potential solutions
6. Costs
7. Schedule
8. Question/Answer Discussion

Paula Beall stated that the photos in the presentation are just a few of the many taken. The pictures were being shown to let everyone see just some of the issues in each of the different agencies. The first set of pictures showed the Emergency Management department. One of the big issues is the main room used by the agency. There is not enough space for the number of people who need to meet in the room. There are storage issues. The administrative assistant's work area is located in this room, so if there is a meeting going on, it is hard for her to get her work done. The EMA dispatch console and HAM radio area is too small, with storage, ventilation, heat, and acoustics issues. To get to the kitchen, you have to walk through the office. There is no general storage or space. The staff has had to find spaces in every room to put stuff.

The next set of pictures were from the Communications/Dispatch area. This department also has no space. There are now four dispatch consoles in the room. There are security issues with the

windows being near the jail. There are heating, ventilation, and sprinkler issues. With all of the agencies there are American Disabilities Act problems with all of the spaces, including bathrooms and hallways. The supervisors for dispatch have to use the recording equipment that is in the director's office, which is not particularly convenient. It is a conflict of multiple people sharing the same spaces that should not be shared. These spaces are also within the Sheriff's Department so there is a conflict between the two agencies. The equipment itself is ten years old and was supposed to be ergonomic but it is not working properly anymore. There are storage issues.

Ms. Beall stated that the next set of pictures showed the vulnerability of the whole 9-1-1 system. If someone climbs a ladder to get on the roof and trips, they could take out the cables to the antenna and communications would be lost. Cables on the wall could be inadvertently ripped off. There is 9-1-1 equipment located underneath heating equipment that has drainage valves in it. It works but there could be a disaster because there is electronic equipment under the water pipes.

Mr. Schiano stated that everything is pretty much jury-rigged at the facility. There are wires just inside the double door to the attic space where a lot of this equipment lies, which is right next to the sally port to the jail. Anyone, for any reason, could break into those spaces and sever the lines, which would disable dispatch.

Ms. Beall stated that she also wanted to point out that the antenna on the roof is attached to the exhaust vent.

Ms. Beall showed some photographs of the IT room at the Sheriff's Department and the 9-1-1 room. There is no work space for the IT staff to be able to go in and work on the equipment. The wiring is spilling out of the wall and the ceiling. In the 9-1-1 equipment room, it used to be the lab for the Sheriff's Office so there is plumbing that has been capped off and there is also electrical equipment. If a pipe breaks in there, the electrical equipment would all be lost. There are storage issues. The training room in the Sheriff's Department, which is shared with Dispatch, is being used for storage so there is not much room to do training. The Sheriff's Office has no real storage area so they are just having to put stuff wherever they can find a spot. There is even storage in the women's locker room, including file cabinets. The chief deputy's office is actually a portion of the hallway leading from the SO into the jail. His office also doubles as a small conference room. There were more photos that showed storage issues, including storage that ended up in the locker rooms and bathrooms. There are also more ADA problems in the bathrooms. Nothing is up to code. The storage in the 9-1-1 room should not be there because if it falls over it could damage or take out equipment.

Mr. Lichtman stated that if you are going to be fiscally conservative, if it is not broken, you do not try to fix it. The problem is, the departments are probably their own worst enemy because they are making everything that they have work. The problem is that the equipment is old and only working because of the incredible efforts of the staff. This will only hold out for so long. QA13 went through, saw what the departments had, and then asked what each department would ask for if they could have anything they wanted. Then they were asked what the minimum was that they would need. These basic needs were then compared with other similar jurisdictions. QA13 then came up with a space list for all of the spaces that were required. It came out to be 30,631 total gross square feet that is required for all three departments put together.

Ms. Beall showed three different space layouts, one for each department. Each showed the existing space currently occupied and used by each department, and also showed how much more space is actually needed on top of the existing space. There is no EOC and Training space at all right now.

Mr. Lichtman stated that their task was not to go out and seek sites, but to cover that base, he showed an aerial view map that marked off a radius of a half mile, one mile, and one and a half miles from the jail. He stated that for their task and for the purpose of their report, they focused on the jail site because it is already county property. If the County used an existing building elsewhere, it would mean renovation. Because of the security needed for the structure, by the time you are done with the heating ventilation, air conditioning, security, electrical, and assuming the structure is good, the County may save twenty percent over the cost of a new facility. Then, however, there might have to be additional square footage to make that building fit the needs and there may be developing structural problems that have to be dealt with over time. In some cases, it could potentially be cheaper in the long run to build a new structure rather than renovating an existing one.

Mr. Lichtman asked if Mr. Normand Laberge wanted to address the existing site.

Mr. Laberge stated that there is a certain advantage, from an environmental viewpoint, to use land that is already developed. This is not a developed site. There is some information from when the jail was built about the subsoil and some issues that came up during construction. An area was already designated for future county use. If you use an existing site, you already have a road leading to the site, a method to dispose of waste, and a source of water, which simplifies some of the process. It will be easier to match the existing site with your needs. If you are working with a brand new site, you have to establish road access, waste disposal, a water source, etc. The jail site was focused on because it was available and there are certain aspects that would make it suitable for expansion. A few years ago there was a study for an expansion at the jail, and in considering the expansion we looked at those options and tried to select sites that were compatible with the expansion of the jail if that was something that would happen in the future. Looking at the site from an environmental viewpoint, you will have to look at natural resource protection, issues with wetlands, and the size of the site. For the jail site, since it has potential, it is suited for development. There are wetland areas near the site. The parking lot would have to be addressed. If an Emergency Operations Center is built, FEMA regulations will come into play, which adds to the complications of engineering design. There are some requirements for seismic activity but there are no seismic problems detected with the area. The area may have been a waste disposal site or a dump, and that would have to be considered. A structure would have to be designed that could sit on the geotechnical features of the property. Another advantage is that there is already power at the site. If the County went to another site, a specific assessment would have to be done. Depending on the funding for the project, there would have to be a soil contamination assessment done. For the scope of this project, this was not done at all.

Mr. Lichtman stated that one of the issues is that for the foreseeable future, the jail still meets standards and is going to remain in use despite the State takeover; therefore, the County should avoid building anything that could prevent the future expansion of the jail. That may be something that is considered later. Mr. Lichtman stated that they were not designing buildings but wanted to show what could potentially happen on the site in terms of laying out individual components. He reviewed some diagrams of possible floor layouts if the County built a one, two, or three story building next to the jail to house the three departments. One specific point made was that if the County built a multiple-floor building, Dispatch should be on the top floor since it needs to be the most secure.

Mr. Lichtman showed charts with cost figures. He stated that it was not a construction estimate, but rather establishing a budget to see what the County needs to do rather than going out to bid. Total construction costs were about \$7.8 million. Total project costs end up being about \$9.8 million. He stated that it was better to estimate costs high now, and have them turn out to be low later on, than to give low cost estimates and ends up with the costs higher than expected. By the time the process gets to the point of bidding, the County will have a good idea of what will be available for construction funding. All of this information and more will be included in the final report.

Mr. Lichtman showed a timeline for the next year. For the first month, procure design funding only. By the end of the second month, finalize architectural contracts. A total of ten months was designated to procure construction funding. During that time, designs will be created and reviewed. Three months were marked for creation and review of construction documents. There are review times built into the schedule to keep an eye on the process and to modify plans if necessary. Eighteen months are built into the schedule for construction, leaving two months at the end for transition and occupancy since it takes time to relocate all of the sensitive equipment and to have everything up and running. What is not on the schedule is the time needed to decommission the spaces at the jail that would become empty after Communications moves out, and the time it would take for the jail administration to fill out into those spaces.

Mr. Lichtman asked if there were any questions.

Commissioner Roger Moody stated that the project is much bigger than what he had understood as just a member of the public. He stated that he did not know how much square footage there was in the building on Old County Road, but that was the scale of what the community had been looking at earlier. He stated that there were a number of problems with the property and he was not going to suggest going back to that, but the presentation seemed to be a much larger scope than that. He stated that he did not have any problems with the cost estimates presented by Mr. Lichtman, that they were probably right. A lot of people are finding that they cannot build because of the lack of affordability. He stated that he wanted to ask if QA13 / Lichtman Associates had looked at other options besides the jail site, and if so, what the results were.

Mr. Lichtman answered in the affirmative, but added that the main focus of the study was to determine what the needs are. Once the needs are determined, the information does not do the Commission any good without knowing what that it would cost as new construction and how

long it would take to build. QA13 / Lichtman Associates' task was not to go out and look at other sites or at other existing buildings; however, that can easily be done now because the needed square footage is now known. At that point it will become very site specific to see what the County would save. It may not be cheaper to move to an existing building if it is only 20,000 square feet when 30,000 square feet will be needed. The building would have to be altered to meet the needs. The question might be, does the County then construct an addition onto the existing building, or find another existing building with more than 30,000 square feet and lease out the additional space? It will become very site and building specific as to what the costs will be.

Tom Johnston stated that there were a couple issues with comparing anything to the Old County Road site. Even if the building had the right square footage, it did not have a lot of things that any building the County would need, including a central fire alarm system and other necessary features. Both the internal and external features of the building would have been high maintenance over the years. By the time the life-safety components are what they should be and you have updated all the systems in an older building, it may cost less in the long run to construct a new building.

Barry Norris asked for the longevity of the space if building on the jail site.

Mr. Lichtman replied that the longevity for secure building of that type would be 40 to 50 years since it would be another structure made from the same materials as the jail. A vinyl-sided, wooden structure would end up needing to be replaced.

Mr. Schiano stated that for each department, the projection of square footage included the kind of expansion that would be required over a thirty-year period.

Mr. Norris stated that this was the kind of information that the public needed to hear. The proposal in square footage does not just solve today's problem, but will serve out for the next thirty years.

Mr. Schiano stated that the other issue that is important, both in terms of site and also the building type, is the next step. The County will now be able to examine buildings in terms of location, traffic issues, structure, and the site itself. These types of public safety agencies have building type needs that a wooden structure would not provide. There are a series of building analyses that can be conducted fairly quickly as part of the next step, which would begin to isolate what sites and structures are available, and immediately put aside those that do not meet that criteria. That would shorten the list of available sites. The other thing that needs to be kept in mind is that using the jail site means you do not have to purchase a site since the County already owns it and there is room to build.

Mr. Schiano stated that using the jail site does a number of things on different levels. One, the site does not have to be purchased. Two, the site is large enough to handle a structure of this type. Three, the SMRT report and the current study can be combined so that the jail can still function properly if the County decides to construct another building on-site. It is hoped that a byproduct of this process is that the issues at the jail will also be resolved. The Sheriff's Office needs to be in close proximity to the jail because the Sheriff's Office is part of that command structure. Four, the site already has enough parking for all of the departments using the site. The site is optimally located in town and has access to the tower. There is no issue of traffic with this site, which there would be if it was located in a more populated area. The jail site has all of these advantages. The site itself is not officially being recommended, but the study was geared to the site to make sure that nothing that was proposed would negate the site or create a situation where the site is eliminated as a possibility. So far, nothing has come up to indicate that the jail site is a bad location to consider. When going to the next step, it will be advantageous to take that site as a paradigm in terms of issues it resolves for a facility like this. Other sites can then be compared to this location now that it has been studied.

Commissioner Roger Moody stated that it was not clear to him what the purpose of the public hearing was that would be taking place later in the evening. He stated that generally there is a proposal or a decision being made and the public is being asked for their input. There is nothing on the public hearing agenda that reflects a decision being made by the Commission. He asked if the public hearing was intended to be more of a forum for being able to educate the public about this phase of the study process and to give them a chance to respond.

Mr. Schiano stated that this was the intent. He stated that what Commissioner Moody was seeing right now was an introductory presentation that was not the final presentation. He stated that input has been welcome throughout the whole process. The thought had been to provide a preliminary presentation to the public and to get their responses of what this means so far. An

actual Commissioner's meeting was not asked for in relation to the public hearing. It was just intended to be a forum. He stated that things may have gotten turned around a little bit because he thought that the Commission would be coming to the public hearing, not to this meeting. He added that the Commission was not being asked to make any decision at this time.

A member of the public stated that he thought that the public hearing would be good if the grant process was still underway. If the public did not hear anything about it until the grant was being awarded, and suddenly the Commissioners are looking at going out to bond for the rest of the money for a project that the public did not even know about, this would upset the taxpayers. He stated that this was the problem with the Old County Road property. It had already gone so far ahead without the public even knowing that a project of that magnitude was underway. He commented that it would take a salesman to be able to sell a \$9.8 million project because that is money that is going to end up coming out of everybody else's budget.

Mr. Schiano that this is why they were very interested in working with the County Commission and all of the agencies, and find a path that everyone is comfortable with. He stated that it is very premature to be talking about money even though Mr. Lichtman did talk about costs. It is too soon to talk about it because we do not know where the funding will come from or what funding is available. The County's responsibility will not be the total project amount. It is hard to not react to a number like \$9.8 million, but the County's responsibility will be far less than that. It is hard for some to see how the \$1 million grant would have been much help towards \$9.8 million, but that will not be the only money that the County would try to procure.

Chris Shrum stated that the grant money (\$1 million) was not a lot but that it was just one opportunity. Other opportunities will be looked at. The reality is that the County will have to go out to bond for some of cost. If the County does not do well now with informing and educating the public, the County will be in jeopardy of having the bond rejected later on. This is in part why the decision was made to step back a bit and not continue with this particular grant from Homeland Security. The grant will come up again, and other grants will continue to surface. The County will pursue other sources of funding aggressively. He stated that it was planned to submit a proposal for the grant but it would not have been competitive because the grant asked for very specific design standards and the County is just not there yet.

Mr. Laberge stated that the services studied by the needs assessment are existing services already being offered by the County. QA13 / Lichtman Associates determined the square footage required to execute those services in compliance with regulations and standards. The square footage of 30,000 is what is believed will allow the three departments to be in compliance with regulations. It is not about new services, it is about existing services. The purpose is to see how it can be done properly in complete compliance with current regulations. \$9.8 million seems like a lot, but it is a service that is needed and is already being provided.

A member of the public asked if the cost predictions were for a specific option.

Mr. Lichtman stated that they establish budget numbers, rather than doing a specific estimate. The amount will vary slightly depending on what ends up being built, whether it is two or three stories. The \$9.8 recommendation is a budget number, not actual costs.

A member of the public asked if, in that budget, was there a line for renovations to the current jail.

Mr. Lichtman said that this was not covered in the budget numbers.

Chris Knight commented that at a previous meeting, the total amount of costs being discussed was at about \$4 or \$5 million. He asked how it went up to \$10 million. He asked if the estimate of space needed had gone up and that was why the costs amount had changed.

County Administrator Andrew Hart responded that when QA13 met with the department heads and the Commission, the figure was given as anywhere between \$5 and \$10 million, but there was not enough information to hold any number to be true. The \$9.8 million is a more realistic figure. The \$1 million grant had been intended to help offset that. It is uncertain how much grant funding the County will be able to receive for an EOC, but the County needs to look at other grants. There is some money that will pay for some of the funding so that the total project costs amount is not what the County will end up having to pay. There has been a lot of discussion of other buildings, some of which have already been looked at in the past. The Maine DOT building was looked at on a couple of different occasions, and there were issues raised of why it was not an appropriate building for the County to use. One of the bigger costs in moving to another facility, and therefore an important factor, is that of moving the dispatch equipment. There are

some options with using the jail site that may reduce the costs of moving the dispatch equipment, especially since some of the equipment, such as the tower, would not need to be moved.

Mr. Lichtman stated that the total project cost includes both the moving costs and the costs for replacing equipment, especially in dispatch. The 9-1-1 equipment is ten years old and is not going to last forever. Even if the County does not build anything, money is going to have to be spent anyway on new equipment for dispatch.

Mr. Shrum stated that Mr. Lichtman had brought up a good point. The equipment will only work for so long and then it will be unusable. The County cannot wait until the equipment no longer works because then Communications would be disabled. Also, waiting too long to replace equipment can mean having a large expense all at once because it is a crisis situation, which can be a huge financial burden. Knox County is not at the crisis stage but is flirting with danger by waiting.

Mr. Lichtman stated that the Communications staff does such a great job that a lot of people do not realize the difficult job they have to do by making do with what they have. This will only hold out for so long. Mr. Lichtman estimated that the replacement of the dispatch equipment was probably between ten and fifteen percent of the total construction costs.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center asked if Dispatch was currently ADA compliant.

Mr. Lichtman replied in the negative.

Ms. Beall stated that if Dispatch were to remain where it is, it would need ventilation and ADA compliant areas. There is not enough space for all the people working there and no way to make it bigger.

Mr. Schiano stated that there are planning pressures on all of these agencies because of the co-location and lack of space. It causes undue stress on agencies when they have to share space. There are issues that are difficult to resolve by only doing the minimum. If there is a need to bring in witnesses to the Sheriff's Office, they have to walk right through Dispatch to do it. Some of the utilized space is right in front of the sprinkler system for the building. Workers need to be able to get to the system for inspections but there is equipment in the way. The Jail, though not a part of the space needs study, is sharing its space with Dispatch and the Sheriff's Office, so it too is crowded.

Mr. Lichtman stated that anyone going into the jail from the Sheriff's Office has to walk through the deputy's office. Also, in the mechanical space are all of the offices and storage spaces. These are illegally inhabited spaces.

Commissioner Roger Moody stated that the problem is, even if it is the best plan in the world, it will still get nowhere if no one votes for it. He stated that as a commissioner, he wanted to see what was realistic. To have a dream plan and have the voters shoot it down accomplishes nothing. He stated that he wanted to ask if it would be possible to get a timeframe, in writing, that shows from this point onward until the end of the contract services with the County.

Mr. Schiano asked if Commissioner Moody meant the QA13 / Lichtman Associates contract for the needs assessment.

Commissioner Roger Moody replied in the affirmative. He stated that he had not seen the contract and that he did not know what was in it. He stated that he had heard that this was a major effort but was still unsure if other options were being looked at. He asked if the needs assessment was done.

Mr. Lichtman stated that the assessment was about 90 percent done.

Ms. Beall stated that it was a needs assessment that consisted of going into the locations and looking at the existing conditions to see what was needed to run the agencies in terms of space and equipment. It was the first step for the County to determine which direction it will want to go. It is to set a baseline. The County does not have to act on it or can work on it later. QA13 / Lichtman Associates would also help with educating the public.

Commissioner Richard Parent asked what the current space needs are since the assessment took into account future space needs. He asked specifically what the square footage was that the County needed.

Mr. Lichtman said that this was a good question. He stated that what they were trying to do was to project into the future. What the County has right now does not meet the current needs. He stated that he did not believe that the space needs outlined are extravagant and that all of the spaces were planned for future expansion if needed, but that there is nothing in there now that was not required. He stated that he was not sure that anything was beyond being future-oriented.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center stated that Mr. Lichtman had mentioned corrections experience. Knox is one of four jails being considered by the Maine Board of Corrections (BOC) for a dedicated purpose. The Knox jail may be used as 24 or 38 hour holding facility. She asked how that would change the way the jail is using the space now.

Mr. Lichtman stated that if that happened, he suspected that the jail would still need all the spaces it currently occupies in the facility but there would be a greater turnover and potentially more traffic, so there might need to be an expansion of some of the areas, such as the booking area or the sally port. The essential functions of the jail would be the same.

Mr. Lichtman stated that he wanted to respond to the question voiced earlier by Commissioner Moody, of what does the County do if it gets voted down. He stated that eventually things are going to get to critical stage when the whole system goes down because the equipment finally fails and then the County is going to have to spend a lot of money to solve the crisis.

Mr. Norris stated that one thing he thought that the Commission needed to realize was that a few years ago, the County elected to become a communications center. The communities rely on the KRCC but it is not currently adequate to live up to what was promised. The space that Dispatch is currently in is not large enough for them to give the services that are required. The County needs to make some positive planning efforts to show that we are planning to support a communications center, so that in the future we will be able to provide the needed support. Knox was not asked to support a PSAP, we were asked to support a communications center. If some of the towns decided to put in another radio and wanted the KRCC to monitor it, the communications center needs to be able to take that equipment. Director Linwood Lothrop does not have the space to expand the dispatch equipment or to increase the number of dispatchers to cover the communications need. There are a number of lawsuits in other areas coming out because of inadequate communications. As part of the process, the commissioners need to look at where dispatch is headed, how is it going to get there, and how is Knox County going to fund this so that the tax payers do not have to foot the entire bill. With the economy the way it is, it cannot be expected that the problem be dealt with right away, but maybe it can be planned on and be worked toward. If we do not have a plan, we will not be able to secure federal funding.

Communications Director Linwood Lothrop stated that the communications needs are growing all the time in terms of the number of emergencies handled by the dispatch center. The KRCC is the seventh busiest PSAP in the state. In the first year, the call volume was around 20,000. In 2008 the call volume was over 42,000 emergency incidents, not counting the many non-emergency phone calls that the center receives, which totals over 138,000. Director Lothrop stated that he wanted the public awareness level to be raised. The communications center had started out on a seven to ten year plan, and the ten years are almost up. He added that every year he has attended budget hearings asked for money to be set aside for communications but it has been shot down every year at the public budget hearings by the same people who expect the dispatch center to be there when they call for help. The citizens of the County need to be made aware that there is a real need and need to support the communications center.

Wally Tower stated that as a tax payer and as the Deputy Police Chief for Rockland, \$10 million is a lot of money. When the towns entered into an agreement to use the communications center, the level of service was supposed to be near or better than what was previously being provided, but it is not. It is nowhere near what Rockland had for a dispatch center. If the level of service is not there and an incident happens, and an officer, a firefighter, or a civilian dies, the County will just have to start writing the checks. He added that he was only advocating for a new dispatch center.

Mason Johnson said that the main concern of the space needs is the dispatch center. The other departments would find more space convenient, but Director Lothrop needs room for his equipment. The County will never get \$9 or \$10 million to fund all three departments. The KRCC, however, needs to be supported and the concerns need to be appropriately addressed. Voters may want to do it, but they are not in the position to pay for it. Even \$3 million would be a hard sell, but ultimately, because of the critical need of an adequate dispatch center, it needs to be accomplished. The people just cannot afford it to support all three departments getting more space, no matter how persuasive the argument is. The other departments really do need more space, but the County will never be able to sell it to the voters.

Deputy Police Chief Tower stated that as Chris Knight had mentioned, a \$3 or \$4 million figure would be more palatable to the taxpayers than \$10. The plan should be scaled down and the \$4 million expense should be dealt with right now. It may not be the most ideal plan, but it may be all that is possible for the time being.

Mr. Shrum stated that there are other grants that the County will be applying for to keep the bonding amount as low as possible. The County needs to look at funding formulas that may help with getting the funding. If the County continues to defer the problem, it will only turn into a larger, more urgent problem down the road. Funding options need to be pursued aggressively.

Mr. Lichtman stated that the County could go ahead and design the building so that parts of the building could be either built as an addition or have it be dependent on funding. It is not an all or nothing issue. It is not a master plan tied to a time, but tied to whether or not there is money. If the County built the dispatch center first and left the other departments until later when more funding becomes available, even if the money never materializes, at least the County would have its dispatch center.

Mr. Knight stated that as someone who had been involved since day one, it seemed to him as though the jail site was the only option looked at. He stated that he thought that the Commissioners would be criticized for that at the public hearing. It will not sound good to say only one site has been looked at and that it will cost nearly \$10 million.

Mr. Lichtman stated that he would try to rephrase by stating that the jail site was a what you might call “generic site A”, which could be any site that the County owns which already has infrastructure there.

Mr. Knight stated that there probably would not be any argument from the people currently in the room that this makes the most sense, but that is because most of the people in attendance have already been involved with this for many years. One problem is that if the cost figures get brought up without having the answers about funding, the public may feel like the County is revisiting the Old County Road problem of not keeping the public informed of what is going on as it is happening.

A member of the public stated that those present needed to move away from calling it a \$10 million dollar price tag because that is not what it is. It is better to look at it from the point of view that a certain amount of square footage is needed and it is going to cost a certain amount per square foot. People may ask what is critical right now. If only dispatch is looked at, at one third of the cost, it might be possible to get it done. Dispatch is the most critical infrastructure and needs to be taken care of.

Deputy Police Chief Tower stated that in this economy, the only thing people are going to see is the price tag. People are not going to look at the scope of what you are doing and why. If the public and media hear the \$10 million figure, they are all going to go ballistic and be against the project in its entirety.

Mr. Lichtman asked if it made sense to talk about project phasing at the public hearing.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center stated that it made sense. She stated that when the presentation started, one of the first things mentioned was that there had been a conversation with the directors of the three departments about what they would want if they could have anything that they wanted. That is what the \$10 million figure is; it is having everything that they want.

Mr. Schiano stated that this was not true. The department heads were asked that question, but then they were asked to cut back to the bare minimums. He stated that we need to refrain from calling the needs assessment a wish list, or a dream list, for the agencies. QA13 / Lichtman Associates looked at the needs and the necessary functions, not the wants. It is a paired-down needs assessment to have these agencies working on an efficient level. The purpose of the presentation for the needs assessment is to give you the basic needs for each department.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center asked if the basic needs had anything to do with complying with ADA requirements.

Mr. Schiano stated that some of it did, but that it may be more in terms of equipment and building infrastructure, and not literally square footage. The Sheriff's Office for example, has an evidence lab that is in such bad shape that there is a good chance that the kind of forensics done there would negate the kind of appropriate verdict in a court case. There are issues like this that are part of all of these agencies. For the departments to work efficiently, they need an amount of

a certain kind of space, and that is what the needs assessment is about. It is an essential breakdown of each of the agencies. The department heads were spoken to at length about their current and future needs. The presentation for the public hearing is not about presenting a wish list.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center asked if in presenting the needs of all three departments, it was being stated that it would be difficult to prioritize because all three departments cannot do what they need to be doing.

Mr. Lichtman stated that he would agree with that.

Mr. Schiano stated that in a sense, yes.

Mr. Lichtman stated that this does not stop the Commission from prioritizing.

Deputy Police Chief Tower stated that the Rockland Police Department can do what needs to be done regardless of what is available for space and equipment, and have done so for many years. The department might not have the optimal amount of space, but the job still gets done. He stated that he would not deny the Sheriff anything that her department needs, but that there are other options than having the amount we want. You can only work with what you have. You do not necessarily need more. He stated that he would be happy with whatever the City of Rockland gave him to work with.

Mr. Lichtman stated that you have to be careful with that argument because if you carry it to the point of ad nauseam, that is exactly what is going on right now. Every department is functioning right now in the space that they have, but they are not functioning well.

Deputy Police Chief Tower stated that the initial proposal for the Rockland Police Department for many years was for \$1.2 million. It was the ideal situation but what the department has now is around \$200,000. The department is happy and the job gets done. The scale had to be cut back because the voters would not approve \$1.2 million, but they did approve \$200,000.

Commissioner Roger Moody stated that in response to Mr. Lichtman's earlier question, some discussion about phasing would be useful at the public hearing. He added that some of the visuals in the presentation made it hard to understand phasing so it might be helpful to have it explained more.

Ms. Beall stated that as part of the presentation they could be more clear about the jail site as being the site they used because it was there and they could physically go to it and study it. There were already drawings done for the site and there had already been another study done on it. She added that it is just a site that gives you a baseline that other sites can be compared to in the future.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center stated that she thought that what happens is that the focus, that space is needed, is lost. People just forget that space is needed. If it can be established in the public view that space is needed, then the jail site can be used to compare sites, but not before.

A man suggested that if the presentation of the needs assessment stopped before getting into a discussion about the jail site and just focused on the needs of the departments in regards to the actual space needs, it will be far less confusing to the public. Otherwise, they might misunderstand where we are in the process. The extra information will all get lost and all the public will see is the \$10 million dollar figure.

Mr. Schiano stated that as part of the presentation it would be a good idea to discuss the issues of phasing a project this size. It is also important because QA13 / Lichtman Associates still sees this as a kind of partnership with the County Administration. He stated that he would like to incorporate Chris Shrum and County Administrator Andrew Hart in the conversation of the costs and funding because they are involved in the process of finding out what funding is available. He stated that the presentation was done with the knowledge that the County would not take on the fiscal responsibility of the entire project, that some of the funding would come from other sources. It would be good to have Mr. Shrum and County Administrator Hart continue in the process.

County Administrator Andrew Hart said that if it were possible to backtrack, he would have never thrown an amount out there. It would have been better to say that we do not know the cost yet. No one has voted on an option yet so there is no definite cost. This process is currently just in the stage of seeing what the needs are. This was not done when the County looked at the Old County Road property, which was why so many people were against it. Instead of finding out what the departments actually needed for space, it was just decided to allot a certain amount of

space to each department. This is why the project failed. Now the County has taken a step back and is doing a space utilization and needs assessment to find out just how much space the departments really need before trying to make any decisions. The Homeland Security Grant was a separate thing from the needs assessment but they ended up becoming connected because a total cost amount was needed as part of applying for the grant. If QA13 / Lichtman Associates had not been asked to help figure out a total cost to apply for the grant, it would never have been a part of the needs assessment. It is too bad because the \$10 million figure is what is confusing people since the needs assessment was only supposed to determine the needs, not the costs of a construction project. For the public hearing it would be better to stop the agenda at Options and Concepts and get rid of Costs and Schedules. He stated that it is unknown what the costs will be because no option has been chosen and no decisions for action have been made. If the project is scaled back, the costs will be lower than what was presented by QA13 / Lichtman Associates anyway. There is no way to know if \$3 or \$4 million is an accurate estimate either. He stated that he would rather state that the costs are unknown than confuse the public with large dollar figures. The County is not at the point yet to state which option it is going to proceed with.

EMA Director Ray Sisk stated that he was shocked by the \$9.8 million figure even though he was involved in the process. He stated that when he was first hired by the County, the Old County Road property process was already underway. He stated that he could not see a process that had led the County to that point. When the County took the option to stop what was happening and to step back, the thing that he noticed was that the County had not followed a process. He stated that when you hear \$9 or \$10 million dollars, that closes a lot of doors to the conversation that the County needs to have with the community. It completely eclipses what the needs are because all people will see is the huge dollar amount. He stated that as a department head, his department would be better served by the extra space. Public safety needs to be as close to a zero failure rate as possible. The County needs facilities that help make that possible but the County needs to go about that knowing exactly what is needed to provide that level of public safety. There has to be a line somewhere that the County will not allow the standard of public safety to go beyond. New Englanders are used to being frugal but we need to point out the critical infrastructure deficiencies and what we need to do about it at a minimum.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center stated that she agreed with Director Sisk. She stated that if the County is genuinely going to do this with the public, it needs to be established when we need the space and how it can be accomplished; not only where the money will come from, but also what the end result might look like. It is great that the County already has the land, but there might be some other options. It is not a foregone conclusion that the County is going to build something.

Mr. Lichtman stated that the agenda for the public hearing could be amended to avoid confusing the public about the purpose and scope of the needs assessment.

Director Sisk stated that even if all that was accomplished by pulling out from the grant was to remove the perception that the County is moving forward on an option to build when we are not, then pulling out from the grant was done for the right reason. The County still needs to position itself in the right position to be available to take advantage of whatever grant opportunities are out there. The economic stimulus package could eventually fund a good portion of the project of the County is ready to start doing something. The County may not be ready in time, however, because there will probably be at least a year of discussions ahead. The County needs to have a discussion, rather than an argument, with the public.

Mr. Shrum stated that this is a high risk, high consequence situation. Part of the discussion needs to be framed around this fact. It is where the discussion needs to start. If we do not keep that in mind, the County will suffer for it because that is the reality of the situation. This is not because of terrorism but because Maine is often victim to natural disasters. He stated that in the last 15 years, he could only think of one year where Knox County did not under a disaster declaration. Natural disasters are part of our existence in Maine. Just three weeks ago Knox County had an ice storm.

Commissioner Roger Moody stated that he disagreed with not telling the public about the \$9.8 million figure. He stated that one of the problems that counties have had for a long time is what he calls "transparency". He stated that he would rather be upfront at this stage and talk about options, phases, the process, and time frames, than to have it look like the County is hiding that number. The County is going to look at phasing and other options. The \$9.8 million might be an ideal solution but the County is going to look at realistic solutions which might be a lot less than that, and just leave it at that.

A man stated that the \$9.8 million number was already out there, so there was no way to avoid mentioning it at the public hearing. He stated that transparency is the only way, but it needs to be

explained that the process was hurried up because it was thought that the County was going to be able to get a grant. Now the County has the ability to pull out of the grant and to take a look at the dollar figure and the other options, rather than proceeding down the road for the grant. That is still being openly honest with the people.

Mr. Shrum stated that this was a major part of the discussions the previous week. The County needs to honor the process so the County backed away from the grant. The Commission needed to be given the information so that decisions could be made. The County does need grant money, but the timing was not right for this particular grant.

Director Sisk stated that he agreed that the \$9.8 million figure should be mentioned, but that it should be discussed in the same vein of thought as a family buying a \$60,000 car when they may be only able to afford a \$30,000 car, and may not even need such an expensive car. The question is what is it that they really need?

Mr. Lichtman stated that if the group wanted to discuss cost at the public hearing, he would rather not give a full-blown costs estimate. He stated that he could mention it but to give too much information would put an end to the discussion. It is such a sensitive issue that if the detailed cost estimate was up on the screen that would be the end of the meeting. He stated that if someone asks what it costs, he would address that, and state that as a total project budget, the County is looking at \$9.8 million, but that is not a realistic figure yet because it has still not been established what the priorities are. The County has not decided what, where, or if something is being built.

Ms. Beall stated that all of the information in the presentation would also be presented to the Commission in the final report. It will include more detail than today's presentation.

Director Sisk suggested that the public hearing be the first in a series of public meetings to educate people in the community about the process and the needs of the County.

County Administrator Andrew Hart stated that part of why he did a summary of the past process was so that people would understand that this is not the first time the County has tried to do something about its space needs. Dispatch moved to the jail back in the year 2000. It is already 2009 and nothing has changed. In the year 2007, the Jail Study Committee studied the space in the jail and made recommendations to move Communications and Patrol out of the jail, but nothing has happened yet. At the time, the jail was overcrowded with prisoners, before the jail was able to get the variance so the County would not have to board out so many prisoners. EMA was brought into the study when the County looked at the Old County Road property, and that was in part because EMA, an EOC, and Communications have similar needs. The EMA also brings in a funding source that the other departments do not have access to.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center stated that nothing had changed because it had not been driven by need, there had not been a sincere public conversation, and when a figure was brought up, any conversation that could have happened was derailed.

Mr. Norris stated that the County needed to continue with the process. He stated that the County needed to decide what the next steps should be. There should be communication with the communities to build support for the dispatch center. If we are in crisis, how do we overcome it? The process is not ready to go before the public for a vote. There needs to be a plan to educate the public and to be prepared so that the County can justify the expense in a way that the public will support it. There should also be site studies, and that needs to involve the public too. Instead of public hearings they should be called informational meetings and there should be several of them to make sure that everyone can have a chance to learn about the process. It all needs to be explained so that the voters will support the Communications budget and the need for an EOC.

Mr. Lichtman stated that if the question comes up of what the next steps should be, he will suggest three. The first would be site studies, to establish where the best site is. Two, the Commission needs to establish what the priorities are now that the County will have the final report of the needs assessment and will have an idea of what the costs are. Three, go out and determine what the sources of funding will be. Four, once a site is chosen, it will be time to start designing, whether it be expansion or renovation of an existing building, or construction of a new building. If the County determines it can only get funding for a dispatch center, it can start there and perhaps meet the needs of the other departments as time goes on and more funding becomes available. The County should not limit its options for the future yet.

III. Adjourn

- A motion was made by Commissioner Roger Moody to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Richard Parent. A vote was taken with all in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 5:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Candice Richards

The Knox County Commission approved these minutes at their regular meeting held on March 10, 2009.

Anne H. Beebe-Center, Chair – Commissioner District #1

Richard L. Parent, Jr. – Commissioner District #2

Roger A. Moody – Commissioner District #3